



Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Michigan, 14th District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html

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**CONYERS CRITICIZES PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR SNUBBING
VETERANS, SLASHING LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND TURNING BACKS ON
VICTIMS, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND ELECTION REFORM**

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement regarding today's release of the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2006:

"The President has turned the American economy from bad to worse. After four years of offering tax cuts for his richest friends and turning our surplus into deficits, the President has continued his trend of slashing important government programs. He is particularly cold-hearted in his treatment of veterans, those soldiers who fought bravely in wars he started. The President actually is going to charge veterans who lost limbs or suffered other trauma to pay \$250 per year for prescription medications; their monthly copay would more than double to \$15. The President's proposal is a slap in the face to soldiers making unimaginable sacrifices to serve our country.

"The budget is also misguided when it comes to matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee. In particular, the Community Oriented Policing Program (COPS), Violence Against Women programs, immigration, election reform, and civil rights take harsh and undue hits under the President's proposal.

"As first responders, COPS are on the front lines of our war on terrorism; it defies logic that the President would slash funds for this important program by nearly half. The President has attempted to justify cuts in the past by saying that the 'impact [of COPS-funded officers] on crime is unclear,' totally disregarding the historic decreases in crime it brought about in the Clinton Administration.

"If we take away funds now, our local communities who have used COPS money to hire police officers will be devastated; many already are hard-pressed financially because of the slowdown in the economy. So there is no question that reducing funds will lead to police layoffs and an increase in the cycle of crime and violence. If President Bush is unclear about the benefits of COPS and community policing, he should speak with the countless local governments and police organizations that have praised COPS as an invaluable crime-fighting program.

"Second, during his first term, the President tried to undermine the law by keeping the Justice Department's Violence Against Women Office (VAWO) in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) instead of a higher and more independent position required by Congress. Now, he is cutting the funds that victims of violence rely on to rebuild their lives. With his meager request, the President is thumbing his nose at victims everywhere.

"Finally, the President has shown his intent to continue his war on civil rights and liberties. He already used the war on terrorism to shred the constitutional rights of Arab- and Muslim-Americans. This budget follows up by actually cutting money for the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, giving it even less than it is getting now.

"Unfortunately, the President's plan does not stop there. This budget goes one step further to completely phase out election reform in the states. Despite the fact that this country has seen two presidential elections in a row plagued with voting irregularities and machine errors, the President wants to eliminate grants to states for election reform."

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